

THE SEARCH FOR CERTAINTY

Compliments of
The Watchman Magazine





I SALUTE THE FLAG!

BY WELDON TAYLOR HAMMOND

I AM a Christian. I gloriously rejoice in the liberty wherewith Christ has made me free. Yet this soul freedom from the bondage and shackles of sin does not lessen, but greatly increases, my gratitude for the national freedom, which I enjoy under the Stars and Stripes.

I salute the flag! This I deem not an act of worship, but a mark of becoming respect for the noble principles to which our founding fathers dedicated their lives; namely, a free press, freedom of speech, and the inalienable right to worship God according to the dictates of conscience. These heaven-born ideals of just and equitable government, vouchsafed in the Federal Constitution, have built and maintained our great American democracy—to the wonder and amazement of teeming millions—so that these United States rank without a peer in the history of nations.

The star-spangled banner is but an emblem of the God-given rights of mankind to civil and religious liberty, which this grand republic has solemnly pledged itself ever to uphold. Gazing proudly upon this beautiful herald of freedom, with a thankful heart for the manifold blessings of its benign rule, I am constrained to exultingly shout—

"LONG MAY IT WAVE!"

The Search *for* Certainty

(*"David Dare" or "Prophecy Speaks"*)



By a Converted Skeptic

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FOREWORD

JAMES C. MUIR, of the University Museum Lectures, University of Pennsylvania, is author of several books showing how history and archeology have confirmed the truthfulness of the Holy Scriptures. His best known works are "How Firm a Foundation," "His Truth Endureth," and "Business Men of the Bible." In a letter he wrote to me, as follows, concerning this book "The Search for Certainty" (known also as "David Dare" or "Prophecy Speaks"):

"I started to read this book simply because it had been handed me by your good self. I read the first two chapters casually, the third chapter with interest, and the balance of the book with amazement.

"The work aroused my interest to such an extent that, after several readings, I decided to check the historical and archeological portions of the book, and, since this may be of interest to you, I am writing to say that the reader may accept as trustworthy the historical and archeological data which the author has so ably presented.

"From the purely cultural standpoint this work could be read with profit by every student in our secondary schools, and, from the religious viewpoint, should be read and studied with care by every thinking Christian."

RALPH E. CRAWFORD,
Circulation Manager of "The Watchman Magazine"

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In their quest for certainty about the Holy Scriptures men have dug up cities of the past and scrutinized the writings of long ago. Experts are shown examining ancient fragments of papyrus at the British Museum, which are believed to be the oldest pieces of New Testament manuscript in existence.

THE SCOFFER SCOFFS

GEORGE EMERSON turned to his father, and pointed an emphatic finger at an advertisement he had just read. Amazement was in his voice: "Read that, dad."

The elder Emerson took the paper and read aloud, his tone growing more amusedly cynical as he followed the item:

"INFIDELITY CHALLENGED AND REFUTED.

"An unusual lecture by David Dare, a converted infidel. All skeptics, scoffers, unbelievers, infidels—all classes of doubters—are especially invited to hear this important address. They may interrupt the speaker at any time during his lecture with questions or with denials of his statements. If you are a freethinker, agnostic, heretic, or atheist, COME! THIS MEETING IS ESPECIALLY FOR YOU."

The father laid the paper down, contempt in his manner. "This fellow certainly takes in a lot of territory."

"Well, he includes you, dad! Here is your opportunity," said George gleefully. "You are always asking Christians, and particularly ministers, all kinds of hard questions that they can't answer. Let's go and hear this man. I have some questions I'd like to ask him too." George's questions, however, were hazy, and born of the desire to see his father in action.

George was a wide-awake, questioning youth of twenty who had been reared in an atmosphere of religious doubt. The elder Emerson was a large, rather dogmatic man of average education, with a keen mind turned slightly cynical.

While they were discussing the strange announcement, Mrs. Emerson and her daughter, Lucile, entered. Mrs. Emerson was a motherly woman of the home-keeping type. Lucile was a pert lass of eighteen, thoroughly "modern," and sophisticated beyond her years, who amazed her father, horrified her mother, and delighted her brother.

"Another religious argument," she laughed, her quick eye taking in the slightly belligerent attitude of her father.

Though the Emerson family arrived fifteen minutes early, it was

with some difficulty they found seats in the large auditorium.

"Why," exclaimed Mr. Emerson in surprise, "Doctor Morely is chairman of the meeting. David Dare must have an important message to induce the city's most prominent physician to introduce him."

Just then, Mr. Dare, a man past thirty, above average height, walked briskly, but with utter lack of self-consciousness, to his place beside Doctor Morely, who engaged him in conversation while the crowd continued to gather.

The chairman called the meeting to order. "A series of lectures on 'Infidelity Challenged and Refuted' will be given here every Sunday afternoon for the next few weeks," began Doctor Morely crisply. "This above all others is an age of doubt. The speaker, Mr. Dare, was reared in an infidel home. He was once an ardent skeptic. He has invited all classes of doubters here, and freely offers them opportunity to question his statements, even to the extent of interrupting him to propound their questions or denials. This is a serious attempt to aid skeptics in their search for the truth about the Bible. Mr. Dare will now tell you what he proposes to do."

"You are all here under a misapprehension of what I plan to do," he began.

"I am not here to challenge any one. I do not challenge infidelity nor infidels," he went on calmly. The audience stirred restlessly.

"Nor do I expect to refute infidels or infidelity." Dare's clear voice took on firmer tones. It could be heard above the belligerent murmurings that arose everywhere.

"This is a huge joke," snorted the elder Emerson disgustedly; "we are wasting our time here. Suppose we go." He half arose.

"Nevertheless, infidels and infidelity will be challenged. Infidelity and infidels will be refuted," David Dare promised in a clear, ringing voice.

"Yes, doubters will be challenged and skepticism refuted, but not by me. The scoffers of today, the unbelievers in this very audience, were challenged and refuted many hundreds of years ago by One infinitely wiser than I.

"It will be my part to set before you certain facts. You will be given an opportunity to admit them, or invited to deny them if you

can. Since every opportunity is granted to question the statements made, since you are freely invited, even *urged*, to interrupt the speaker at any time with inquiries or denials, your *silence* will be taken as assent to his statements. Is that not fair?"

"Yes, yes. Go on," impatiently responded a number in the audience.

"And further: I warn you that I expect to proceed step by step from infidelity to Christianity. You are invited to find flaws in this process. I am as anxious to find them as you are. I am fully as anxious to get help from you as to aid you. This is far too serious a matter for me to dare risk remaining in error. I earnestly invite your united help. Look for flaws in my reasoning and fearlessly point them out. Failing to find any, I assume that you will as fearlessly accept the inevitable conclusion."

"Fair, indeed, provided he lives up to his promise," remarked Mr. Emerson. His sentiment was evidently shared by the majority present. Few, however, were convinced that the man who stood before them really meant what he said.

David Dare picked up a small, flexible leather book and held it toward the audience in his right hand. "Here is a book called the Bible. Unique claims are made for it. Its warm friends go so far as to maintain that it is the word of God. Indeed, millions have cheerfully suffered horrible deaths rather than deny this or disregard its teachings. And other millions stand ready this minute to follow their example.

"Now, all of us here are doubters; but a Book for which millions died and are still ready to die, certainly ought to be examined. We are willing to investigate. Is this Book open to questioning? Does it invite scrutiny?

"How are we to test a book for which such high claims are made? Where can we best begin? What part is most vulnerable? Does it boast qualities which make it different from every other book in the world?

"Suppose we turn to the Book itself and see. Here I read, 'Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.' 1 Thessalonians 5: 21. Does anyone here disagree with that?"

Mr. Dare paused for reply. There was none.

"Good; we are together so far. 'Come now, and let us reason to-

gether, saith the Lord.' Isaiah 1: 18. Even the most skeptical mind will admit the fairness of this invitation. Note that the reasoning is *together*. But God gives His reasons first so that we may 'prove' them. Does anyone here find fault with that?"

Again Mr. Dare paused for reply, but no one ventured.

"How are we to assay this volume? Have its writers given us any means by which to verify its statements? Do they especially invite or urge us to try any particular part? Does any portion claim to be impregnable?"

"Naturally, if there is any section for which special claims are made, we shall investigate them. We are not now concerned with the statement that it is *all* the word of God. We must take some part that we can put into the crucible for the acid test.

"If we, as Peter claims he did, could witness Christ's great glory, actually hear the voice of God speaking to His Son Jesus, we would consider we had very convincing evidence. However, Peter, telling of this experience (in his second epistle, chapter 1: 16-21), adds that there is evidence far more certain than even the audible demonstration of the presence of God. 'We have also a more sure word of prophecy.' And he concludes by saying, 'Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.' "

Mr. Emerson rose quickly, towering to six feet of impressive stature.

David Dare stopped immediately.

"All I ask," he said calmly, "is that you give your name, and make your statement brief and to the point. This applies to all who may speak hereafter. Now I shall be glad to hear you, sir."

"My name is Emerson. My statement will be brief and on the subject. But I doubt that you will be glad to hear me. However, you invited it. I am amazed that a man of your intelligence attempts to palm off on this audience such antiquated and exploded stuff as prophecy. There is no real prophecy. The facts are always twisted to fit the prediction. And if there is real accord, it is purely accidental. Finally, prophecy was usually written after the event, and made to fit into it. Anyone can write that kind of prophecy.

"I could easily *now* write a prophecy of Lindbergh's flight across

the Atlantic, date it 1000 A. D., and credit it to some famous scientist of that time. Then, fifteen hundred years from now, when that prediction, presumably written nine hundred years before the event it foretells, is found, a fine case for accurate prophecy could be made out for that scientist."

"That's right, that's right," commended several voices as Mr. Emerson sat down. "A real poser. Sounds unanswerable."

All eyes now turned back to David Dare, who stood tranquilly by the stand, ready to answer.

"If prophecy is so easy to disprove, how is it that among all the thousands of books written by infidels there is not one in all the world devoted to showing specifically how Bible prophecies have failed?"

"No one has replied to Bible predictions," said Emerson, in a strong, clear voice, "for the same reason that no one has replied to the Delphic oracle prognostications—not worth the trouble. Herodotus relates the story of Croesus consulting the famous Delphic oracle as to whether he should fight the Persians. He was told that 'by crossing Halys, Croesus will destroy a mighty power.' He did: his own! Thus, no matter which way the battle went, the augury would be true. All prophecy everywhere is like that—amusing, sometimes ingenious, but never worthy serious attention. But you make great claims for it."

"Bible prophecies are worthy of consideration because they are as far from Delphic utterances as midday from midnight," replied Mr. Dare. "Bible predictions burn all bridges. If the thing does not happen, no apology can be offered."

"Will you Christians risk anything on prophecy? What of consequence is at stake to believers?" asked Mr. Emerson.

"Just this: The Bible bases its whole claim to credence on the accuracy of its forecasts. Why have unbelievers never made a detailed study of them so that they might expose the fraud of prophetic chicane to the deserved contempt of the public, if the prophecies are what you claim?"

"You, Mr. Emerson, along with other skeptics, despise prophecy. There were many such unbelievers in Paul's day. To them and to you he said: 'Despise *not* prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.' 1 Thessalonians 5: 20, 21. Here you are

challenged above all things else to *prove prophecy*; that is, test it, and if it prove true, hold fast to it.

"Christ repeatedly appealed to fulfilled prophecy as evidence His contemporaries might accept. Fulfilled prophecy is especially adapted as a test, for we are nineteen hundred years from the latest Bible book and thirty-three hundred years from the first. God has devised an absolutely new method of proving His word, one that cannot be gainsaid, that cannot be counterfeited. This strange method of eternally authenticating His word compels the ruin of empires long dead, the mutation of states, the obliteration of nations and civilizations, to witness to the truth of His word.

"All the places famous in antiquity are now on the stand, fresh and potent, bearing their testimony with far greater fullness and accuracy than at any former time.

"God claims to be the *only one* able to foretell the future. He says in Isaiah 46: 9, 10: 'I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done.'

"The ability to foretell is the seal of God's deity which He claims cannot be counterfeited. The Bible challenges others *everywhere* to foretell the future: 'Who, as I . . . shall declare . . . the things that are coming, and that shall come to pass, let them declare.' Isaiah 44: 7.

"But this is by no means all. Such strong claims are not casually made. Have you skeptics a cause to present? Hear Isaiah 41: 21-23: 'Produce your cause, saith Jehovah; bring forth your strong reasons.' Now, what are the strong reasons? Let us read on: 'Declare unto us what shall happen: declare ye . . . things to come. Declare the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods.'

"While science has solved many strange problems, and seems to be almost supernatural, it has not brought us one whit nearer to penetrating the future than were the ancients. Human beings can as easily pluck the stars from the Milky Way as they can wrest from the future its secrets.

"But if the future *has* been read; if centuries ago numerous predictions, so varied and so minute that they cover well-known nations and extend over thousands of years—if such predictions have

been made so as to preclude all possibility of wresting the facts to fit the prophecy; if skeptics themselves admit the accuracy of the fulfillment, and can offer no explanation; and if you here are witnesses to this fulfillment of prophecies made over twenty-five hundred years ago, how can you doubt that some wisdom more than human foretold the events that have come to pass?

"Skeptics have gone to great pains and expense to disprove the Bible. I will tell you two very simple, effective, and final methods of shattering the Bible to atoms: First, just disprove the prophecies; second, produce some other book containing real prophecies. God says neither can be done. To do either will blast forever all confidence in the Bible as the word of God. Why have unbelievers never done this? Does anyone here claim that this has been done? Will anyone here attempt to do it?"

Mr. Emerson arose and spoke:

"Bring on your prophecies, and we will see what we can do. You have made some large, not to say preposterous, claims for them. Let us now have your evidence."

"We are more than pleased to present it," replied Mr. Dare.



Above is shown the famous Rosetta Stone, discovered in 1799, which contains inscriptions duplicated in Greek, hieroglyphic, and demotic characters. This text provided archeologists with the key for the deciphering of many ancient historical records. Below are seen archeological excavations in Ur of the Chaldees.

THE TEST BEGINS

THE applause that greeted Mr. Emerson's demand indicated the anxiety of the audience to hear the evidence. David Dare, Bible in hand, stepped to the edge of the platform and proceeded with his talk:

"For two thousand years Tyre grew in importance until she was mistress of the sea as was Babylon of the land. She was the commercial center of the world. Carthage, the rival of Rome, was only a colony of Tyre—Tyre, the beautiful, the rich, the learned. Tyre was the New York of Asia. Ships from all nations anchored in her harbor and their passengers bartered in her streets.

"While Tyre was at the height of her glory and power, while it would seem she *must* stand forever, along came Ezekiel, who prophesied about 590 B. C., and said: 'They shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers: I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock. It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God: . . . and they shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the water. . . . And I will make thee like the top of a rock: thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon; thou shalt be built no more: for I the Lord have spoken it, saith the Lord God.' Ezekiel 26: 4-14.

"Immediately after the giving of the prophecy, Nebuchadnezzar besieged Tyre, and after thirteen years of effort, took the city and destroyed it, wreaking fearful vengeance on buildings and people."

Here an auditor jumped to his feet.

"You cannot prove the prophecy was written before Nebuchadnezzar's time. According to your own statement, Ezekiel was contemporary with the king."

"True," agreed David Dare. "While personally I believe the prediction was made before Nebuchadnezzar besieged Tyre, I shall not refer merely to that siege. Though the prophecy began with the king of Babylon's siege, its predictions looked more than two thousand years into the future, as we shall see.

"Observe that while the ruins of the old city remained after

Nebuchadnezzar had finished with it, the prophecy declared that the timbers and rocks and even the very dust should be cast into the sea, leaving a bare rock to be used for spreading nets.

"This prediction was not fulfilled by this king of Babylon, and it seemed improbable it ever would be fulfilled; for if Nebuchadnezzar, in his anger, had taken full vengeance, and had not thought of this, who was likely to care enough about the ruins of a deserted city to be so violently destructive? It would be the very frenzy of madness. But meanwhile there stood the prophetic words, awaiting fulfillment.

"Two and a half centuries passed, and still the ruins stood, a challenge to the accuracy of prophecy. Then through the East the fame of Alexander the Great sent a thrill of terror. He marched swiftly to attack new Tyre, 332 B. C. Reaching the shore, he saw the city he had come to take, with half a mile of water surging between them, for it was built upon an island. Alexander's plan of attack was speedily formed and vigorously executed. He took the walls, towers, timbers, and ruined houses and palaces of the ancient Tyre, and with them built a solid causeway to the island city. So great was the demand for material that the very dust was scraped from the site and laid in the sea."

When the original objector made no movement, Mr. Emerson stood up to speak.

"I grant the statements you have made concerning Tyre are true, but what of it? It will be impossible for you to prove that the supposed prophecy was written *before* the events it describes. At this great distance from the events, three or four centuries is a small matter. Your argument is far from conclusive, and I for one believe the book of Ezekiel was written after Alexander's time."

Lecturer Dare smiled in reply: "You overlook three great difficulties in your view," replied Mr. Dare. "First, the Encyclopedia Britannica, fourteenth edition, Volume IX, pages 13, 14, under article, 'Ezekiel,' is emphatic in stating that the book of Ezekiel was written 586-450 B. C., and this is the extreme critical view. Thus, according to the skeptical version, the prophecy is still one hundred eighteen years antecedent to the event. But we will pass to the second difficulty.

"When you claim Ezekiel *pretends to foretell* what in reality was

written *after* the event it professes to predict, you make a book of otherwise high moral teaching a most vicious book, dealing in deception of the basest sort.

"But, Mr. Emerson, while you create these two difficulties for yourself, there is still a third inherent in your position that no skeptic can remove.

"I will admit, for the sake of the argument, that the book was written whenever you desire, say 330 B. C. Even you cannot claim a later date." Mr. Emerson nodded agreement.

"Perhaps you forget there are other particulars in the prediction besides destruction. In some prophecies the cities were to be destroyed and rebuilt. Such was the fate of Jerusalem, which still exists.

"The third difficulty of your view is that old Tyre was to be built no more. This divine sentence of judgment has been a challenge down the centuries to every unbeliever on earth. God has had a challenge sounding for twenty centuries, daring you and every other skeptic to rebuild this city and thus disprove His word."

"I never heard of such a thing," gasped Mr. Emerson in surprise. "Are you serious?"

"Certainly," replied David Dare, "never more so. I will next tell you how to disprove the Bible.

"God Himself has not only dared you to disprove His predictions, but has taken the pains to tell you how. Tyre has continued a daily defiance to every unbeliever. 'Thou shalt be built no more: for I the Lord have spoken it,' says the prophecy. Read it for yourself in Ezekiel 26: 14. The reason it cannot be rebuilt is here given. Here is a test that God has set for the boasting unbeliever—the simple one of rebuilding a city. To do that one thing would disprove the Bible.

"And this is not asking an unheard-of thing. Many cities in the past have been rebuilt; even Rome rose again, after Nero had it burned to furnish him with poetic inspiration.

"A dollar each from the unbelievers in England and America would be sufficient to rebuild Tyre, and thus blast forever the reputation of the Bible as a truth-telling book. Why not form an infidel colony on the site of old Tyre, go into the fishing business in

a modern manner, and there, in defiance of the prophecy, dare to answer God's challenge, 'Thou shalt be built no more: for I the Lord have spoken it'?

"The site is inhabitable; for ten million gallons of water daily gush from the springs, and fertile fields stretch clear to the distant mountains.

" 'A good guess,' you say. But that is not a sufficient answer. It is especially lame in view of the fact that no person outside the Bible ever made a solitary correct forecast covering hundreds of years concerning any city on earth. How is it that only Bible writers are able to 'guess' with perfect accuracy two thousand years into the future?"

Mr. Emerson stood up to reply: "It would be natural for a writer, looking upon a ruined city, to assume, hence to predict, that it would never again be inhabited."

"Such an assumption, however natural," replied Mr. Dare, "would have plunged the prophet immediately into serious difficulty.

"To illustrate: Ezekiel turned his attention to Tyre's still more ancient sister city, only thirty miles distant. For centuries it had been declining in power, while Tyre was still glorying in the splendor of its heyday. Accepting your view of the date of Ezekiel adds strength to our contention, for while Sidon was still in a state of decay it was taken by Artaxerxes Ochus, king of Persia, in 351 B. C., and destroyed!

"Now, according to your theory, Mr. Emerson, Ezekiel was written still later, at least after Alexander's time. So if the prophet were judging by appearances in 330 B. C., as you claim he did judge, he would have pronounced complete oblivion as the inevitable fate of Sidon, for nothing seemed more certain than its utter eradication. But Sidon still remains, even now possessing ten thousand population. Let us read the words of the prophet Ezekiel (chapter 28: 20-23): 'The word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face toward Sidon, and prophesy against it, and say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I am against thee, O Sidon. . . . For I will send pestilence into her, and blood into her streets; and the wounded shall fall in the midst of her, with the sword upon her on every side.'

"Observe that the judgment on Sidon was not utter extinction like that on Tyre, but only blood in her streets, wounded in her midst, the sword on every side. Sidon has continued an uninterrupted existence down to the present minute.

"Now, suppose Ezekiel had said that both Tyre and Sidon were to be destroyed and were to be built no more, then every one of the ten thousand inhabitants of Sidon would be a living proof of the falsity of the prophecy.

"Suppose, further, that the prophet had said Tyre was to live, but would undergo great suffering, while Sidon was to be utterly destroyed and never rebuilt; how derisive the skeptic would rightly be of the Bible claim to predictive accuracy!

"How did it happen that the prophet was exactly right in both cases? How is it that the city that never has been rebuilt is the city of which this fact was foretold, and that the city which has continued to exist with age-long suffering is that which the prophet foresaw would continue in existence to the end of time?

"Having explained this to your satisfaction, you have a still harder question to be answered. Sidon, like many other ancient cities, might have sunk into insignificance, so that in its utter misery and defenselessness it could have offered no resistance to even a feeble enemy, and would have tempted no one's cupidity. How did Ezekiel know that, in spite of many terrible experiences, it would continue a place of strength which, age after age, would be fought for, and passed on, wet with blood, from one conqueror to another?"

Mr. Emerson replied: "These two cities were well known and powerful, but at the time of the predictions there were indications of the fate that was to befall them. The predictions turn out to be fairly accurate; but you cannot establish your thesis that the Bible is true on so slim a basis."

"Certainly not, and I do not claim to," responded Mr. Dare. "A prophecy to meet any test you desire to make can easily be produced. You claim that Tyre and Sidon had already to some extent indicated in themselves their fate. We'll take a city of which this cannot possibly be said.

"Out of a score of such forecasts, notice two sentences about Ashkelon, a city hardly less famous than the two we have just con-

sidered. Ashkelon shall be 'a desolation' (Zephaniah 2: 4); 'Ashkelon shall not be inhabited.' Zechariah 9: 5.

"This city was founded 1800 B. C., and was in the height of its power about the time of Christ. So you cannot claim that at the time of the prediction its impending fate was apparent to the observer. But how about it now?

"Let me quote from the fourteenth edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica, Volume II, p. 544: 'Now a desolate site on the seacoast twelve miles north of Gaza. . . . Protruding from this sandswept terrain, shattered columns and the remnants of ruined buildings and broken walls bear ample testimony to a past magnificence. . . . The country around is fertile. Vines, olives, and a variety of fruit trees flourish.'

"Observe that this world-recognized authority, in describing the present condition of Ashkelon, uses the very word of the prophet—'desolate.' The prophet saw twenty-five hundred years ago what the historian now sees, and both use the same word to describe the final condition of that city. But to quote further from the same authority:

"Ashkelon 'was the birthplace of Herod the Great, who adorned it with fine buildings. During the Roman period it was a noted center of Hellenic scholarship. It became also the seat of a bishopric. From 104 B. C. for four and a half centuries it was an *oppidum liberum* of the Roman Empire.'

"Thus on any theory of Biblical composition the city grew in importance for hundreds of years after the prediction.

"In 636 A. D. it passed to the Arabs. During the Crusades it was the key to southwest Palestine. Baldwin III captured it after six months' siege in 1153. It was thus still a very powerful city fifteen centuries after the prophet foretold its destruction. During the next hundred years its history was a bloody one. Finally, in 1270, Sultan Beibars destroyed its fortifications and blocked its harbor with stones. Thus for six hundred sixty years the lofty towers of Ashkelon have lain scattered on the ground, giving a picture of desolation, and the ruins within its walls do not shelter a solitary human being.

"But suppose Ashkelon were, like Sidon, a flourishing city, or suppose the predictions had been transposed, how eagerly would

unbelievers seize upon the fact! And if it were a fact, it should be used. The Bible says: 'Never disdain prophetic revelations, but *test them all.*' 1 Thessalonians 5: 20, 21, Moffatt's translation.

"You do the disdaining, but not the testing. Here are three cities. The prophets foretold their condition exactly as they are today. However you choose for it, the fact remains that these prophecies are true."

Mr. Emerson took this occasion to speak: "You have picked out three cities. Surely, if the Lord is the author of predictions, He tells us something about whole nations as well. And the predictions should be given at a time when it would seem impossible for the forecast to come true, and should reach to the present time."

"Your suggestions are reasonable. Out of several countries which meet your test, we will select the oldest country in the world—Egypt."



The mighty Sphinx and the towering Pyramids remind us of the glory that once belonged to Egypt as a world power.

EGYPT CONFOUNDS THE UNBELIEVER

"You have all admitted," said David Dare as Mr. Emerson sat down, "that Tyre, Sidon, and Ashkelon are today exactly as the Bible prophets said they would be. But you are unwilling to admit, or are not convinced, that this uncanny foresight is due to any supernatural gift.

"When Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel lived, Egypt was then so ancient that she boasted a longer unbroken line of kings than did any other nation. To Ezekiel, the settling of Egypt was as ancient as the beginning of the Christian religion is to us.

"The prophets of his day, 600 B. C., knew Egypt as the granary of the world, eminent in science, in the arts, in luxury and magnificence, a leader of civilization. For many centuries those artificial mountains, the justly famed pyramids of Egypt, had stood as proud sentinels of a proud country of many splendors.

"Like its own monuments, Egypt seemed to bid defiance to the tooth of time. At the fire which burned on her hearth, all nations had kindled the lamp of knowledge. She had the unity, repose, and calm majesty of conscious power, the grandeur of great age. To the eye of the natural man, be he scientist or philosopher, there appeared on the horizon of the future no faintest cloud to threaten the peace and power of Egypt.

"Nevertheless, at a time when all other men, judging by analogy, would have predicted for her practically unending prosperity, Isaiah (chapter 19) and Ezekiel (chapters 29 and 30) foretold many amazing things concerning her, reaching more than two thousand years beyond their death!

"When you get home, read these chapters carefully, as every verse is literally packed with meaning. I shall not take time to quote more than a few of the more outstanding statements.

"In a few words, Ezekiel foretold history that has taken twenty-five hundred years to fulfill and would take several volumes to record. I quote Ezekiel 29: 14, 15; 30: 6, 7; 32: 15; 30: 12, 13:

"They shall be there a base kingdom. It shall be the basest of the kingdoms; neither shall it exalt itself any more above the na-

tions: for I will diminish them, that they shall no more rule over the nations.' 'The pride of her power shall come down. . . . And they shall be desolate in the midst of the countries that are desolate, and her cities shall be in the midst of the cities that are wasted.' 'I shall make the land of Egypt desolate, and the country shall be destitute of that whereof it was full.' 'I will . . . sell the land into the hand of the wicked: and I will make the land waste, and all that is therein, by the hand of strangers: I the Lord have spoken it. . . . And there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt.'

"Every phrase of the verses I have quoted is surcharged with meaning. The doom of Edom and Chaldea and Babylon was utter extinction; but not so the fate of Egypt. The inexorable decree was one of continual baseness and decline. It was to continue a nation, but it was no longer to rule. On the contrary, it was to be ruled by cruel strangers.

"We have only to consider the condition of Egypt six hundred years later to see that this prophecy could not have been the result of mere human foresight. In the time of Christ there was nothing to indicate that the day of Egypt was past forever. She was still very powerful.

"And for six hundred years more, Alexandria, in Egypt, continued the first city in the Roman Empire in rank, commerce, and prosperity. Certainly the skeptic of that day might have read the prophecy of Ezekiel with a mocking smile of derision, and taunted the believing Christian with his unfulfilled prophecy. True, part of the prediction had been fulfilled, but the desolation of Egypt seemed as remote as when the prophecy had been uttered more than a thousand years previously.

"A hundred years later Egypt was still so powerful that the Mohammedan hordes, though arrogant with unchecked victory, hesitated to attack it. When Romulus and Remus founded Rome, Egypt was then nearly two thousand years old. Rome waxed powerful, conquered the world, including Egypt, and was, in turn, conquered by the barbarian hosts of the north. But still Egypt continued powerful, rich, and populous. The Arabs finally decided to attack her. The memorable siege of Alexandria lasted fourteen months, during which the Arabs lost twenty-three thou-

sand men. And then her capture was due to internal treachery. The sight of the city's magnificence and wealth filled the conquerors with amazement.

"While the prophecy may seem slow of fulfillment, it has been certain. The decline, though gradual, has been continuous. Let the infidel pen of Volney tell the story.

"Such is the state of Egypt," says Volney, in his 'Travels,' Volume I, pages 74, 103, 110, 193. 'Deprived two thousand three hundred years ago of her natural proprietors, she has seen her fertile fields successively a prey to the Persians, the Macedonians, the Romans, the Greeks, the Arabs, the Georgians, and at length, the race of Tartars distinguished by the name of Ottoman Turks. The Mamelukes, purchased as slaves, and introduced as soldiers, soon usurped the power and elected a leader.

"If their first establishment was a singular event, their continuance is not less extraordinary. They are replaced by slaves brought from their original country. Their system of oppression is methodical. Everything the traveler sees or hears reminds him he is in the country of slavery and tyranny.'

"Not until modern times could the amazing accuracy of the prediction be appreciated. The more facts we have with which to test this prophecy, the more true it shows itself. Is there anyone here who claims Egypt to be different from the picture given in Ezekiel? How then do you account for the fact that Ezekiel is right, which of necessity you admit?"

Mr. Emerson stood up again: "The writer had observed that in time nations are conquered and become the servants of their masters. He had seen Babylonia and Assyria, as well as smaller kingdoms, pass into the hands of others. Though Egypt was old and still powerful, he reasoned that she, too, would in time suffer the fate of the others."

"But, Mr. Emerson, you overlook a vital point in your argument: Egypt did not suffer the fate of the others. Babylonia, Assyria, and other nations about, were destroyed utterly. Had Ezekiel been predicting by analogy, he would have said that Egypt would suffer the same fate as the nations which had already been overthrown.

"Now, just suppose that Ezekiel had said that Egypt, like

Babylon and Chaldea, would be utterly destroyed, how jubilant would be the skeptics, and how eager to point out the fact that the Egypt of today has many populous cities and a varied population which numbers into the millions. But does the unbeliever attempt to show us a single prophecy concerning Egypt that has failed?"

"Have you given all of them?" asked Mr. Emerson.

"I have touched only the edges of the subject. I will call your attention to only two or three more marvelous predictions concerning Egypt," replied Mr. Dare.

"I now direct your attention to Ezekiel 30: 13, A. R. V.: 'Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: I will also destroy the idols, and I will cause the images to cease from Memphis.'

"Observe that these words are specifically the words of 'the Lord Jehovah.' If the thing predicted did not come to pass, there would be no alibi.

"Now, it is a strange fact that Memphis, founded by Menes, was known as 'the great temple city of Egypt.' A more unlikely fate could hardly be imagined than the destruction of the idols and images of Memphis, because—

"1. The climate of Egypt, where it never rains, keeps in a state of perfect preservation for thousands of years whatever is buried in its soil.

"2. In all other cities of Egypt, whether in ruins or now flourishing, idols and images are found in superabundance. Thebes, former capital of Egypt, though in ruins while Memphis was still in splendor, has them in abundance.

"3. At the birth of Christ, six hundred years after the prophet lived, the predicted ruin seemed more impossible still, for Memphis was large and populous, Alexandria being the only Egyptian city that exceeded it in size.

"4. And twelve hundred years after the prophet lived, Memphis was the residence of the governor of Egypt. So you see it was impossible for the prophet to have written this prophecy after the event.

"5. And in the thirteenth century, Abdul-Latif, an Arabian traveler, tells of the 'wonderful works which confound the intellect, and to describe which the most eloquent man would labor in vain.'

"Thus, eighteen hundred years after the prediction it was still unfulfilled, and—"

Mr. Emerson stood up, and David Dare stopped abruptly, waiting for him to speak.

"Mr. Dare," he said, "I observe that your prophecies are a long, long time fulfilling. A thousand to two thousand years are necessary for your prophecies to prove themselves. Now, given enough time, *any* prophecy concerning the destruction of a city or nation must be fulfilled."

"I was hoping, Mr. Emerson," replied Mr. Dare, as the applause died down, "that you would make such an observation. Your very argument is proof you admit the fulfillment; that you do not claim the prediction was written after the event, nor that the facts have been juggled to fit the prophecy.

"The audience will please observe that if the fulfillment of the prediction is near the date of the prediction, it is at once claimed the prophecy *must* have been made *after* the date of the fulfillment. And if the fulfillment is two thousand years after the prediction, the explanation then is that any prediction will eventually be fulfilled, given time enough.

"But unfortunately for this theory, some prophecies already mentioned and others to be produced, cannot be explained in this easy manner, and—"

"Can you give any convincing example?" asked Mr. Emerson.

"Memphis, the very city we have been considering, is a good example, for time did not destroy the idols and images of other Egyptian cities equally old. But listen to these words from Miss Amelia B. Edwards, Egyptologist, in her book, 'A Thousand Miles up the Nile,' pages 97-99: 'And this is all that remains of Memphis, eldest of cities: a few rubbish heaps, a dozen or so of broken statues, and a name! . . . Where are the stately ruins that even in the Middle Ages extended over a space estimated at half a day's journey in every direction? One can hardly believe that a great city ever flourished on this spot, or understand how it should have been effaced so utterly.'

"But let us suppose that all that was necessary to fulfillment was time. Now turn your attention to Ezekiel 30: 12: 'I . . . will sell the land into the hand of evil men.'

"This certainly denotes unresisting surrender into the hand of an enemy, just as slaves were sold. The slave has no rights, the wicked no mercy.

"Volney, the French skeptic who traveled all over this country, calls Egypt 'the country of slavery and tyranny.' Malte-Brun, another traveler, writes of 'the arbitrary sway of the ruffian masters of Egypt.'

"The history of Egypt for the past eighteen hundred years is but an amazing commentary on the words, 'I . . . will sell the land into the hand of the wicked.' The impress of that terrible hand is everywhere seen."

Mr. Emerson interposed: "It would be a safe prediction to say evil men would govern. Nearly always rulers of the past, especially conquerors, were evil men."

"True," replied Mr. Dare. "I am glad you admit the truth of the prediction, whatever your explanation. However, in this connection consider another prediction in the same verse: 'I will make the land desolate, and all that is therein, by the hand of *strangers*.'

"Never once in all the past twenty-five hundred years has Egypt been under the rule of her own prince, but always, without even the solitary exception to prove the rule, she has been a subject nation, ruled by strangers—Persians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantine Greeks, Saracens, Turks, French, and British—strangers, *always strangers*, as predicted.

"Now, here is a prophecy which time would tend to defeat. For other subject nations have thrown off the yoke, grown in power, and finally made their former masters serve them. How did the prophet know that the Egyptians would never regain control of their government?

"Consider the strength of the skeptics' position if Mr. Emerson could show concerning Egypt what he can concerning Rome, that though conquered, she threw off the yoke and ruled herself. But he cannot.

"At our next meeting we will consider the most all-embracing prophecy in the Bible, outlining the history of all nations of the earth, beginning twenty-five hundred years ago and reaching to the present moment, yourselves being the judges."

THE DARING OF DANIEL

"THE story of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire was first written, not by Edward Gibbon the skeptic in the eighteenth century A. D., but by Daniel the prophet in the sixth century B. C. And Gibbon the skeptic used six large volumes in telling us in detail how accurate were the predictions of Daniel the prophet."

Mr. Emerson arose, amazement in his face, excitement in his manner. "Do you claim that Daniel wrote the book attributed to him in the sixth century B. C.? Why, in all the range of Bible criticism nothing is more widely accepted or more easily proved than that the book of Daniel was not written by Daniel at all, but was written by some unknown author about 168 B. C."

"I am well aware of that, Mr. Emerson. In chapters 2 and 7 are such clear predictions, giving in vivid outline the whole history of the world, beginning with Babylon and reaching to the present moment, that the most skeptical have been hard put to it to account for them without admitting supernatural knowledge on the part of the prophet.

"Infidels seem to think that if they can only show that Daniel never wrote a word of the book, and that it was composed by some unknown person about 168 B. C., its power will be broken and its prophecies vitiated. But for my purpose I will accept the latest date contended for by anyone, and care not who wrote it.

"It is not my purpose to go into the marvelous details of the prophecies of Daniel 2 and 7. It would take a whole series of lectures to cover the subject as it deserves. I plan to develop only one point.

"No matter what the opinion of doubters concerning the date and authorship of Daniel, they admit it teaches that, beginning with Babylon, there will be just four universal world powers—*four and no more*—to the end of time.

"Then, if it is true, as the skeptics assert, that the writer of Daniel lived in 168, he had knowledge of the fact that in a period of only four hundred years, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome had ruled the world in succession.

"In view of this fact the predictions of Daniel 2 and 7, if written in 168 B. C., are fully as remarkable as if they were written in 600 B. C. Despite the fact that four world kingdoms existed in four hundred years, think of the amazing daring of a man who would have the temerity to predict that in all future history there would *never* be another world power!

"Daniel knew this, for he foretold it. But how did he know it? Here is a case where each succeeding century would make more strange the fulfillment, because directly contrary to the trend of history. If Daniel was written about 600 B. C., it is conceded by skeptics everywhere that the predictions are too marvelous to be explained away easily. But you skeptics overlook the fact that if your contention that it was written about 168 B. C. be granted, you introduce another marvel equal to the marvel you eliminate by putting the writing later."

"I still do not see how that can be," said Mr. Emerson.

"I'll make it clear," said Mr. Dare. "By putting the composition of Daniel in 168 B. C., you place the four great universal kingdoms in the past instead of in the future. You thus give the writer the analogy of immediately past history by which to judge the future. He has seen four universal kingdoms arise in four hundred years. But in making his prediction, he goes absolutely contrary to every fact of past history. This is what no philosopher, using all the information at hand, would ever dream of doing. Hence, it is clear that the writer of Daniel had some other source of information than that accessible to anyone else.

"On the other hand, if the book of Daniel was written about 600 B. C., its author did not have available any evidence of one universal kingdom followed by another, for the nations before that date, while powerful, were not universal. Thus in 600 B. C. the precedents of history were unsettled, while in 168 B. C., they were settled. The dating of Daniel in 168 B. C. removes one difficulty only to add another, equally unsolvable by human wisdom.

"But not only did the prophet foretell that there would never be another universal kingdom after the fourth, but he predicted the breaking up of the fourth into a number of smaller nations, which were to continue to exist, with exceptions noted by the prophet himself, to the end of time.

"Now, can you imagine the predicament the Christian would be in today if, somewhere down the ages, after the fall of Rome, a world dominion like that of Rome had thrust itself athwart the stream of history? Suppose some all-powerful Alexander of the Middle Ages had conquered all the known nations of the world, and cemented them into one mighty empire subject to his sovereign will—what could I say? I pause to inquire if any skeptic here can produce any such failure of prophecy.

"Every great king or powerful warrior assumed that someone was of necessity going to be a world ruler, and asked why he should not be the one. And if just one had succeeded, what an irrefutable argument against the truth of prophecy the skeptic would have!

"Each fulfillment, taken by itself, is a strong point in favor of divine wisdom on the part of the prophet, but each additional fulfillment increases the strength of the evidence, not by addition, but by multiplication.

"Every Jew you meet is a miracle. This will be proved in our next lecture."



Members of a United States Army bomber crew are shown looking over the city of Jerusalem, around which clusters so much of the history of the Jewish nation and of the birth of the Christian religion.

EVERY JEW A MIRACLE

"Nowhere in all the world is there anything so strange, so wonderful, so sad, as the Jew. He is the most pathetic, the most unique being on earth.

"Vast ruins, moldering palaces, broken sculptures, shattered and marred by the violence and vengeance of barbarians, are all that remain of Rome, mightiest of kingdoms.

"The palaces of the Cæsars lie desolate. The kingdom of Rome has sunk into oblivion, the names of its rulers are forgotten, or remembered only for their merited infamy. The iron kingdom, as foretold by Daniel, has been shattered and divided, and has no successor.

"But the Jewish nation, whose downfall Rome in the heyday of her power accomplished, whose leader was slain, whose city was destroyed, whose temple was annihilated, whose children Rome sold as slaves—that nation still lives and thrives and multiplies on earth.

"In Leviticus and Deuteronomy, Moses clearly outlines the political and religious history of the Jews for thirty-four hundred years—from 1500 B. C. to this present moment."

"But you cannot prove Moses wrote these predictions," interrupted Mr. Emerson. "In fact, it is generally conceded that the Pentateuch was not written until 800-600 B. C. instead of 1500 B. C., a matter of 700 to 900 years' difference."

"For our purpose," smiled Mr. Dare, "it is immaterial whether the books credited to Moses were written 1500 B. C. or 100 B. C. So I'll cheerfully accept your latest date. But that will not solve your difficulty. I will ask you, Mr. Emerson, to read Leviticus 26: 33, 36, 37, and 44; also Deuteronomy 28: 25."

"Certainly," he replied. He opened his Bible as indicated, and read in a strong, clear voice: "'I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste.' 'And upon them that are left alive of you I will send a faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies.' 'And ye shall have no power to stand before your

enemies.' 'And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly.' 'The Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them: and shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.' "

"Thank you, Mr. Emerson. The scriptures just read are a very few that bear on the subject.

"Now, here is another instance where time, instead of making the problem more simple, makes it more difficult, for we can understand how a people might for a hundred years mingle with other nations and remain distinct, but when this mingling extends to twenty-five hundred years, how shall we account for that nation's remaining distinct all that time? The history of the world presents nothing else like it. Scores of other nations have meanwhile risen up, remained distinct for a while, and then become entirely lost in the great mass of humankind.

"But not so the Jews. They are in every nation, as predicted, and everywhere a distinct people. They are indeed an astonishment. The Jew preserves all the characteristics that he had many centuries ago. He has done what no other people on earth has ever done—he has successfully resisted all the customs of society, all the powers of persecution, all the powerful influences that tend to drive him toward amalgamation with other nations. The children of Abraham are as distinct in religion, customs, and physiognomy as they were three thousand years ago. How do you account for this?"

"The blood stream of this particular people," said Mr. Emerson, "was absolutely pure, kept pure because they were forbidden to intermarry. Hence racial peculiarities have persisted."

"True, they were forbidden to intermarry," replied Mr. Dare. "Your explanation, instead of explaining, adds another difficulty, that of explaining how Moses knew the Jews would obey that mandate thousands of years later.

"Here is a case where every nation in the world has had a part in fulfilling the prophecies of the Bible, for there is not a nation in all the world where the Jew has not gone, and not one where he has not been oppressed in accordance with the prediction.

"Another remarkable thing about it all is the fact that the records telling of their shame are handed down to us by the very people we would naturally expect would want them destroyed. No, there is no other instance of such remarkable fidelity to truth in all history.

"As foretold by Moses, the Jews have literally been 'rooted' out of their land. (Deuteronomy 29: 25, 28.) Not only that, but God says, 'I will bring the land into desolation; and your enemies that dwell therein shall be astonished at it.' Leviticus 26: 32.

"Please observe that while the Jews were to be deprived of their land, scattered to every part of the world, and Palestine laid in ruins, still their enemies were to 'dwell' in it. Could any prediction seem more improbable?

"Dean Stanley, in his 'Syria and Palestine,' page 117, says that 'Palestine above all other countries in the world is a land of ruins.' Is it not a strange fact that a land so filled with ruins should be inhabited? or being inhabited, that the ruins should not have been utilized or removed? But the inspired writer foresaw this fact, and you and I are compelled to admit the marvelous correspondence of fact to prediction.

"Though ruined, desolate, bereft of her own people, Palestine was nevertheless to be pre-eminently a land of pilgrimages, for Moses tells of 'the *foreigner* that shall come from a *far* land.' Deuteronomy 29: 22. And is this not true today? Is there any other spot on earth to which so many pilgrims journey? Not one! More than half a hundred languages are spoken in the city of Jerusalem alone.

"'I will . . . draw out a sword after you,' declares Jehovah, speaking to the Jews. (See Leviticus 26: 33.) The history of this people has been one long, bloody commentary on the uncanny accuracy of this prediction.

"Two million of them were killed, starved to death, or sold into slavery worse than death in 70 A. D. More than half a million more were slaughtered by the Romans sixty years later. The history of the Israelites has been the slaughter of a nation, continuing for nineteen centuries—the sword *drawn out* after them.

"All this was foretold in detail, as skeptics admit, at least two thousand five hundred, and I believe three thousand four hundred,

years ago. How did Moses and Ezekiel and Jeremiah know all these things thousands of years before they came to pass? Will anyone here maintain that these Bible writers were mistaken in what they said would happen to the Jews?"

SKEPTICS WITNESS FOR THE BIBLE

A SLIGHT ripple of applause greeted David Dare's appearance on the platform at the next meeting. He smiled his acknowledgment, and began:

"Look at mighty Babylon in the heyday of her glory. Here was a city that seemed destined to endure forever. The 'golden city' had grown more and more powerful until it was now the wonder of the ancient world.

"She drew her stores from no foreign country. In almost every branch of science she made a beginning. Much of the art and learning of Greece came from Babylon. No, never had the world seen such a city. Its great rampart walls towered upward two hundred feet, and on top several chariots could race abreast. Gleaming in the sun, its lofty palaces and temple towers stabbed the sky above the towering walls and thrilled the approaching traveler while he was yet miles away.

"Here was the magnificent temple of Belus; and here were the world-famous hanging gardens, piled in successive terraces.

"Babylon was not only mistress of the world, but she reposed securely in the midst of the most fertile region of the whole known world. The country was so astoundingly fruitful that Herodotus feared he would be taken for a liar if he related what he had actually seen of the amazing fertility of the soil here."

Mr. Dare ceased speaking as Mr. Emerson arose.

"Everybody here knows these facts about Babylon," he said. "We came here to have infidelity refuted, not to listen to a lecture on the greatness of Babylon, no matter how edifying."

"I am glad you admit these facts," smiled the lecturer. "And they most certainly do bear on my subject, for even before Babylon had become ruler of the world, a prophet wrote in a book and proclaimed openly that 'Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldeans' pride, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.' Isaiah 13: 19.

"A simple statement, that, but one which disproves utterly your contention that Bible predictions are like Delphic oracles, so

that no matter what happens, the event may be interpreted to be a fulfillment of the prediction. Jeremiah adds:

“ ‘Thou [Babylon] shalt be *desolate forever*.’ Jeremiah 51: 26. ‘Babylon shall become heaps, a dwelling place for jackals, an astonishment, and a hissing *without inhabitant*.’ Verse 37.

“Do you claim these predictions are wrong, Mr. Emerson?”

“Of course every schoolboy knows Babylon has been uninhabited for centuries,” came the answer. “But, Mr. Dare, *how* do we know that these predictions were not written *after* the destruction of Babylon, and dated before?” Mr. Emerson sat down amid a slight murmur of approval.

“Would you affirm these predictions were made *after* Christ’s time?” asked Mr. Dare.

“Of course not,” replied Mr. Emerson, “for everybody knows they were included in the Septuagint.”

“True, and so the crux of the whole question is, When were the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah written? As they were included in the Septuagint, they must have been written before that translation was made. When was the Septuagint made?”

“About 200 B. C.,” answered Mr. Emerson.

“True,” replied Mr. Dare; “and for the purposes of this discussion, I will accept 200 B. C. as the date of the composition of these predictions concerning Babylon.”

Mr. Emerson spoke again: “If you admit, Mr. Dare, that the predictions you have quoted were not written before 200 B. C., you have given your case away, your cause is lost.”

David Dare smiled. “On the contrary, the cause of infidelity is thereby made extremely difficult.”

“How so?”

“Because of the astonishing fact that *these prophecies were not completely fulfilled*, according to the admission of the most critical skeptics, *until hundreds of years after Christ was crucified*.

“Not only was the fall of Babylon foretold by these prophets, but they saw and described fallen Babylon *as it is at this moment*, at least two thousand years since they made their amazing prophecies.

“Read thoughtfully the following: Isaiah 13; 14: 4-24; 21: 1-10; 47: 1-11; Jeremiah 25: 12-14; 50; 51. There is enough detail in

these marvelous predictions to fill a book. Those who think these predictions ambiguous, raise a hand."

No hands went up.

"Now those who think the predictions plain and distinct, raise the hand."

This time a sea of hands was lifted. "It looks almost unanimous," he remarked.

"Since the facts I have mentioned are admitted by all of you, how do you, Mr. Emerson, explain their remarkable fulfillment?"

"Those prophets were austere religionists," answered Mr. Emerson, "who saw the wickedness of great cities, and to them Babylon was the symbol of evil; and as they believed God more powerful than the cities, they believed He would overthrow them. So they actually predicted what they so earnestly believed and desired, and not because they had the slightest foreknowledge given from any supernatural source."

Lucile nodded as her father sat down. "Not so bad, dad," she whispered.

"Clever, and quite plausible at first thought," smiled Mr. Dare. "But let us consider a few facts. If the date 200 B. C. is accepted as the approximate date of the predictions, Rome was then twice as old as New York is now, and grew more powerful than Babylon. But the prophets never predicted the destruction of Rome. It still exists after 2,600 years. Yet these 'religious enthusiasts' had as much reason to desire the extinction of Rome as of Babylon.

"The answer given by Mr. Emerson comes perilously near to admitting divine aid. He does base his explanation on a sort of 'religious enthusiasm' which was so keen that it gave the prophets an uncanny foresight into the future.

"Even if, in a sort of religious frenzy, Isaiah and Jeremiah had guessed right about the destruction of Babylon, how can you account for the details of their predictions?"

"That such a land, peopled with the world's most highly civilized inhabitants, the 'golden city,' situated in the most fertile spot of the known world, should become a wild, desolate, seared, wholly unproductive and uninhabited desert, was from a human viewpoint utterly impossible.

"Great Babylon, the city of Baal, the capital and wonder of the

world, fought against Jerusalem, a giant against a pygmy, and Jerusalem became the slave of the giant. But both Babylon and its people have vanished like a dream of the night, while Jerusalem and its people still remain.

“‘Without inhabitant,’ said the prophets. How true, how weirdly, uncannily true! But this is not all. The positions of the world’s most important cities are usually so well chosen, so rich in natural advantages, that population clings to them. Dwindle and decay as they may, some collection of human dwellings still occupies a portion of the original site. Damascus, Jerusalem, Athens, Rome, Antioch, Alexandria, Byzantium, Sidon, have all remained continuously cities of consequence from the time of their foundation thousands of years ago to the present. But it remained for the greatest, richest of all to sink into utter oblivion. How do you account for that, and for the fact that this was all foretold so long ago?”

As no one replied, the speaker continued:

“And we are by no means through. In Isaiah 13: 20 we read that ‘neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there.’ Now how did Isaiah know that the Arabian would continue to exist after Babylon had become dust?

“While a few humble Arabs lived in tents about Babylon twenty-five hundred years ago, the Babylonians were the haughty rulers of the world. But the prophet also said in effect: ‘While the most powerful race on earth will become extinct, together with their world-ruling city, still this small, insignificant, nomadic race of Arabs will continue on and on for two thousand years.’

“How did Isaiah know that the Arabs would continue to live *near* Babylon? Yet the prophecy clearly implies this. Since they were a wandering race, it would be logical to suppose that in time they would either leave the vicinity of such a place as we now know Babylon to be, or would themselves become extinct. How did Isaiah know that the Arabs would continue to live in tents?

“Many explorers and excavators of recent years report that it is impossible to get Arabs to remain on the site of this ancient city overnight. Captain Mignan was accompanied by six Arabs completely armed, but he ‘could not induce them to remain toward night, from apprehension of evil spirits. It is impossible to eradi-

cate this idea from the minds of these people.'—*'Travels,'* p. 235. Yet, as everyone knows, the Arabs are fearless fighters, dangerous warriors."

Mr. Emerson indicated his desire to speak. "I grant that you have brought forward a number of remarkable facts to make a case for prophecy, but surely you do not expect a few unusual coincidences or amazing guesses to convince us. Have you not about exhausted your evidence from Babylon?"

"On the contrary, I have only touched the edges of the abundance of confirmation. There are more than a hundred particulars in the prophecy, each one of which furnishes remarkable evidence of prophetic foresight. All taken together, they would fill a large book. I shall take time to mention but one more.

"In Jeremiah 51: 58 we are told that 'the broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken.' For centuries after this sentence of destruction was issued against these, the strongest walls ever built about a city, they continued to be numbered among the seven wonders of the world."

"There is nothing so remarkable about either this prediction or its fulfillment," interrupted Mr. Emerson. "The prophet, as you call him, who would predict the destruction of the city, would naturally predict the destruction of the walls."

"You forget," replied David Dare, "that all ancient cities had walls, and that other cities with walls not nearly so strong as those of Babylon have been destroyed, but their walls remain in a remarkable state of preservation. However, all I desire to prove by this is that Jeremiah was right. Suppose, for instance, that the walls were standing today in grim defiance of the prophet's words. The Great Wall of China, not nearly so strong, though older, is still standing. If you, Mr. Emerson, could tell this audience that you had seen Babylon's magnificent walls jutting, like the pyramids of Egypt, above the surrounding plains, what a blow it would be against the Bible. But you cannot do this, for the prophet was right, as usual. Although the picture of ruined Babylon was given so many years ago, there are few spots on earth of which we have so clear and true a picture. The historian writing now cannot so faithfully delineate conditions as did Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah more than two millenniums ago.

“You may believe they made clever guesses, or that the marvelous truth of all their forecasts was coincidence only, if you can; but your credulity or faith in that convenient solvent of difficulties, coincidences, arouses my wonder.

“And next I will tell you of an infidel ruler who was determined to defeat prophecy, who used the resources of a vast kingdom and the genius of his favorite commander in an attempt to accomplish his purpose.”

INFIDEL RULER TRIES TO BREAK PROPHECY

DAVID DARE found the hall crowded when he arrived. He began: "After all, it should be an easy matter for infidels to disprove the Bible if they were half as much in earnest as they would have us believe. They need only rebuild old Tyre, or Babylon, or Nineveh; for God has said that these cities will never again have inhabitants. And He challenged the world to disprove His words.

"If unbelievers would inhabit only one of these doomed cities, they would no longer be compelled to argue the question of Bible prophecy, for they themselves would be the living disproof of its truth."

"But that is a fantastic idea, and an absurd and unreasonable thing to ask of skeptics," protested Mr. Emerson.

"The thought of actually trying to disprove a prophecy," replied Mr. Dare, "is not so fantastic. It is just what ought to occur to the logical mind. It did occur to one determined doubter.

"There lived a learned man about 300 A. D. who read the words of Jesus in Luke 21: 24: 'Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.' He had once been a Christian, so he knew the predictions.

"This man also knew that the Bible foretold the utter destruction of the Jewish temple and its services, that the Jews were to be scattered to all nations of the earth, and that Christianity was to go to 'every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.'

"He was determined to overthrow Christianity by *shattering* the prophecies. Thus he would prove Jesus a liar. And he had the power, if anyone ever had, for he was Julian, emperor of Rome, with an immense army and the wealth and power of the civilized world at his command.

"That he intended to stage a contest between himself and God, that he consciously planned to disprove prophecy, is stated by a writer as infidelic as Julian himself—Edward Gibbon, an accepted authority on that period, in chapter 23 of his famous history. Rather than paraphrase, I will read Gibbon's account:

"Julian 'embraced the extraordinary design of rebuilding the

temple at Jerusalem. In a public epistle to the nation or community of the Jews, dispersed through the provinces, he pities their misfortunes, condemns their oppressors, praises their constancy, declares himself their gracious protector. . . . They deserved the friendship of Julian by their implacable hatred of the Christian name. . . .

“‘After the final destruction of the temple by the arms of Titus and Hadrian, a plowshare was drawn over the consecrated ground, as a sign of perpetual interdiction. . . .

“‘The vain and ambitious mind of Julian might aspire to restore the ancient glory of the temple of Jerusalem. As the Christians were firmly persuaded that a sentence of everlasting destruction had been pronounced against the whole fabric of the Mosaic law, the imperial sophist would have converted the success of his undertaking into a specious argument against the faith of prophecy and the truth of revelation. . . .

“‘He resolved to erect, without delay, on the commanding eminence of Moriah, a stately temple. . . .

“‘Among the friends of the emperor . . . the first place was assigned, by Julian himself, to the virtuous and learned Alypius. . . .

“‘“Whilst Alypius, assisted by the governor of the province, urged, with vigor and diligence, the execution of the work, horrible balls of fire breaking out near the foundations, with frequent and reiterated attacks, rendered the place, from time to time, inaccessible to the scorched and blasted workmen; and the victorious element continuing in this manner obstinately and resolutely bent, as it were, to drive them to a distance, the undertaking was abandoned.”’

“Account for it as you please, two facts remain: First, Julian boasted he was going to disprove Bible prophecy by doing what the Bible said would not be done; second, with all the wealth and power of the world at his command, he failed.

“It is immaterial whether the workmen were discouraged by superstition or not.* The prophets did not say *how* such attempts to rebuild were to be defeated. The public were invited by God Himself to defeat His prophecies if they could. Here was a man who boldly, boastingly accepted the challenge, put the

power and wealth of the Roman Empire into the endeavor, and miserably failed. God had said all such attempts would fail. I am glad that if the endeavor was to be made, one who was wealthy, and who was more powerful than any man now living, tried it. No one else since Julian's day has made a similar experiment.

"Interesting as all this discussion has been to the student, the most important topic of all will be introduced next week: Christ—The Heart of Prophecy and History."



More than any other human being who has lived upon this planet, Jesus of Nazareth has left His imprint upon the history of mankind.

CHRIST IN PROPHECY AND HISTORY

"It is my intention in this lecture," Mr. Dare said, "to consider only a very small part of the evidence bearing on the supremely important topic of today. Many valuable books, ably presenting the matter, merit your reading.

"All through His ministry, Christ appealed to the prophets in proof of His startling statements. The appeal to prophecy was not only an argument to prove Jesus the Messiah, but frequently the sole argument. There are more than three hundred prophecies and references to Christ in the Old Testament which are expressly cited in the New Testament as predictions fulfilled in Him.

"And no one can say these predictions were written *after* Christ's time. So there could have been no collusion between the Old Testament prophets and the New Testament evangelists.

"On Christ's first public appearance He appealed to prophecy: 'This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.' Luke 4: 21. 'Then He said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.' Luke 24: 25. And to show His disciples how they should study the Bible, 'beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.' Verse 27.

"However much skeptics may flout prophecy, they admit that the Old Testament does give frequent intimations of the coming of a remarkable personage. And they know that for ages the whole Jewish nation lived in eager expectation of a Messiah. And the surrounding nations, their enemies, knew the Jews had this expectation, and mocked them because of it.

"Some of the passages upon which this expectation was founded were the promise of the seed of the woman in Genesis 3: 15 and the declaration that in the seed of Abraham should 'all the nations of the earth be blessed,' in Genesis 22: 18.

"A remarkable part of prophecy foretold His inclusion of the Gentiles, whom the Jews hated. Yet they recorded and jealously preserved even that prediction. 'I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation unto the end

of the earth,' we are told in Isaiah 49: 6. In Isaiah 60: 3 the prophet says of God's people, 'The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.'

"The prophecy about this coming Messiah was filled with startling paradoxes. In Isaiah 9: 6 we are told that this Son of time is the Father of eternity; this weak Babe is the God of all might.

"The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah stated that the Coming One was to be cut off from the land of the living, a young man without offspring, yet He shall prolong His days, shall see His seed, which shall be so numerous that even He shall be satisfied. He is to be put to death as a despised malefactor, to make His grave with the wicked, and yet the sepulcher of the rich is to be His tomb. He is to be scorned and rejected of men, and yet is to justify many. He Himself is to be treated as a transgressor, and yet is to make intercession for transgressors. Perplexing paradoxes, these!

"Account for it as you please, it is a stubborn fact that this obscure Jew of a small, despised, subject race has become most gloriously a blessing to every nation on earth. This strange prophecy that seemed to be born of the overweening egotism of a race, has become a perennially amazing fact.

"Furthermore, the time of His coming was clearly marked. It was to be not only before the scepter departed from Judah, but while the second temple was standing. 'I will shake all nations, and the Desire of all nations shall come: and . . . the glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts.' Haggai 2: 7-9.

"But this is not all: Daniel gives the exact year of Christ's appearance as the Messiah, and of His crucifixion. (See Daniel 9: 24-27 and Ezra 7: 11-26 for the date of the decree, 457 B. C.) This is one of the best-established dates that can be found in all history.

"The 69 weeks, or 483 prophetic days, or literal years (see Numbers 14: 34 and Ezekiel 4: 6), begin at 457 B. C. and reach to 27 A. D., at which time Christ was anointed as the Messiah by the Holy Spirit. (See John 1: 29-36; Luke 3: 21, 22; 4: 18; Acts 4: 27; 10: 38; Mark 1: 14, 15, marginal date.)

"The middle of the seventieth week, or seven-year period,

brings us to the spring of 31 A. D., when the Messiah was to be 'cut off.'

"However one may attempt to explain it away, these prophecies and dates do fit exactly with the life of Christ, and nowhere else.

"To sum up: it is immaterial to me how you account for it, but several marvelously demonstrated facts stand out:

"1. Centuries before Christ was born a number of Jewish writers, living over a period of 1,000 years, boldly predicted that one of their race would be pre-eminently righteous.

"2. He would be a prophet.

"3. He would be rejected as the Messiah by the very people who foretold His coming, but would be accepted as the Messiah by every other nation on earth.

"4. He would be a blessing to all mankind.

"5. He would live in a certain definite, specified time.

"6. He would be killed.

"7. He would die as a malefactor.

"8. All these facts are testified to by prominent heathen writers.

"9. He was to be not merely a very superior human being, but God on earth.

"10. No one else meets these specifications, and Jesus Christ does.

"11. The truth of the system of Plato, or Karl Marx, or Buddha, or Mohammed does not depend on the question whether they were good or bad men. But if a flaw could be shown in the character of Christ, the whole Christian system would collapse utterly and at once."

Mr. Emerson, who had been quiet during the whole talk, arose to speak. David Dare turned in smiling expectancy to him.

"Mr. Dare," began Mr. Emerson in earnest tones, "I have refrained from interrupting you, for I have a real regard for the Christ, and do not want to appear in the role of a cheap disturber. But while your evidence regarding Him is interesting and not easily dissipated, it is far from convincing. For instance, Genesis 3: 15, 'I will put enmity between thee and the woman,' etc., seems to me rather an unstable foundation on which to base a prophecy of Christ. And most of your other instances appear to me to be equally unsatisfactory."

"I agree, Mr. Emerson," replied Mr. Dare.

Lucile gasped, as did her brother and father and many others in the audience.

"You agree with me!" Mr. Emerson exclaimed. "I don't understand."

"Nevertheless, I agree with you. Any *one* of the more than three hundred predictions relating to Christ is insufficient to prove that He was the expected Messiah. The many prophetic strands taken singly will not prove much, but woven into a rope of evidence, they make a bond impossible to break. Other strands will be woven into our rope of evidence.

"In estimating the influence of Jesus on history," continued David Dare, "consider the difference between Christ and all moralists and philosophers. To gather all the wise and good precepts of all the different philosophers, and separate and discard all the error and gross immorality and absurd superstition in their teaching, would have been a great work. But that a single person, unacquainted with these philosophers, and unlearned in the wisdom of men, should in direct opposition to the established practices and maxims of his own country, formulate a system so admittedly superior to all others, challenges the studious attention of everyone."

Mr. Emerson arose. "Do you mean to imply that the philosophers were absurdly superstitious, and the moralists themselves immoral?"

"Exactly! That is just what I mean to say," said Mr. Dare. "No heathen moralist ever opposed himself to the prevailing vices and corruptions of his own time and country. In fact, the things that these men, the ornaments of ancient times, did and encouraged cannot possibly be related to a mixed audience, or to *any* audience."

"But they taught many fine things," insisted Mr. Emerson.

"Granted," replied Mr. Dare. "That is the point I am making. These men were admittedly the greatest of the heathen world, and the *best* they, who were the best, could give in life and precept was so poor the human race was in a bad way indeed.

"But it is admitted by infidels, as I shall prove later, that Christ, with no secular education, so far outstripped all the moralists and philosophers combined that they rank a very poor second."

Mr. Emerson arose again. "You have presented very fair evidence that Christ fits the specifications of the predictions of the Old Testament. Even so, that does not prove that the religion of Christianity was established by Him."

"Well, let us inquire briefly into the establishment of Christianity," Mr. Dare replied. "That it exists and hence came into being in some manner, no one denies."

"There can be only two theories of its origin—it was founded either by impostors or by Christ."

"The propagation of this new religion was an exceedingly dangerous occupation from the first. To the Jews, Christianity was not only contrary to their long-established beliefs, but to those opinions on which were built their hopes and consolations."

"They looked for a Messiah to deliver them from the Romans. Even to think that these expectations might be disappointed, enraged them. The whole doctrine of Christianity was novel and offensive to them. The extending of the kingdom of God to the Gentiles was a concept foreign to the Jew and certain to antagonize him, rather than win him to the new religion."

"Worse yet, it was necessary for the followers of Jesus to reproach the Jews with an unjust and cruel murder. This only made their work more difficult and dangerous. The disciples of Christianity had to contend with prejudice backed by power. They appealed to a people whom they first disappointed and then enraged—certainly a strange way of introducing a new religion."

"But this was only the beginning of difficulties. Christianity struck at the reigning power—at Rome—and made an enemy of every other religion in existence. It boldly denied at the very outset and with no reserve, *every* article of heathen mythology, and the existence of *every* god the heathen worshiped. It accepted no compromise. It could prevail only by the overthrow of every statue, altar, temple, and god connected with heathen religions."

"Consider here another fact. The ancients regarded religion as entirely an affair of the state—not just allied to it, but an integral part of it. Thus an attempt to overthrow the religion of the state was regarded as a direct attack on the government, as treason punishable by death. And the early Christians knew this."

"It is clear from the testimony of Pliny and Martial that the

deaths of Christians were true martyrdoms; that is, they could have saved their lives at any time by joining the heathen exercises.

"These effects must be explained by adequate causes. Untold millions have thought Christ to be the adequate cause. Even infidels concede it, as will be shown.

"Both sacred and secular writers say the same thing. Here are the facts of a strange story that all these writers are agreed on: In the reign of Tiberius Cæsar a number of people set about establishing a new religion in the world, and in the prosecution of this endeavor they voluntarily encountered great dangers, undertook great labors, sustained unheard-of sufferings, all for the story that a dead man, who was executed as a malefactor, had been raised to life. And this strange story has revolutionized history, changed the tide of empire, and altered millions of lives for the better.

"If the people who published this amazing story were not sincere, they were the biggest liars and fools ever on earth. They were villians for no purpose except to teach honesty, and with no prospect in life except to die a cruel death, execrated by all.

"Never in all the history of the world have men, women, and even children, voluntarily undertaken lives of want, of incessant fatigue, or perpetual peril, submitting cheerfully to loss of home and country, to the endurance of stripes and stoning, to long and cruel imprisonments, and even to being torn asunder by lions or burned to death, for the sake of spreading abroad a story they knew to be false, or that they thought *might* be false. People have never suffered these things for any other cause except for the Christian religion.

"Even skeptics admit the beneficial effects of Christ's life as the most important influence ever to appear in the world. I want to cite two choice admissions out of many that might be given."

Holding up a book he said: "This is Volume II of 'History of European Morals,' by William E. H. Lecky, who is also author of 'History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe.' Mr. Lecky was an Irish historian, statesman, and philosopher who died in 1903, and a leading unbeliever of his time and country. He wrote four large volumes to prove that rationalism is the only guide a reasonable man can follow."

Turning to pages 8, 9, he read:

“ ‘It was reserved for Christianity to present to the world an ideal character, which through all the changes of eighteen centuries has inspired the hearts of men with an impassioned love; has shown itself capable of acting on all ages, nations, temperaments, and conditions; has been not only the highest pattern of virtue, but the strongest incentive to its practice; and has exercised so deep an influence that it may be truly said that the simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and to soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers and all the exhortations of moralists.’

“If Lecky were the only one to say such laudatory things, we might well regard it as a puzzling exception among the bold attackers of the Bible. But now I show you another volume. This is a treatise on ‘Nature, the Utility of Religion and Theism,’ by John Stuart Mill, an English economist and philosopher who died a few years before Lecky. He was likewise noted as a pronounced unbeliever. I read from pages 253 to 255:

“ ‘Christ is still left; a unique figure, not more unlike all His precursors than all His followers, even those who had the direct benefit of His personal teaching. It is of no use to say that Christ as exhibited in the Gospels is not historical, and that we know not how much of what is admirable has been superadded by the tradition of His followers. . . . Who among His disciples, or among their proselytes, was capable of inventing the sayings ascribed to Jesus, or of imagining the life and character in the Gospels? Certainly not the fishermen of Galilee; as certainly not St. Paul, whose character and idiosyncrasies were of a totally different sort; still less the early Christian writers. . . .

“ ‘When this pre-eminent genius is combined with the qualities of probably the greatest moral reformer, and martyr to that mission, who ever existed upon earth, religion cannot be said to have made a bad choice in pitching on this Man as the ideal representative and guide of humanity; nor, even now, would it be easy, even for an unbeliever, to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete, than to endeavor so to live that Christ would approve our life.’

“Observe,” said the lecturer, “that Mr. Mill, the skeptic,

specifically says that an unbeliever cannot do better than to live so that Christ would approve his life. That is perilously near to saying that skeptics should be Christians! I agree with him.

“It is not my place to say why Lecky, Mill, and others I might quote, have still, in the face of these admissions, called themselves skeptics. But it is a fact that a large number who were unbelievers have left their skepticism and become ardent, professing believers. Next week it will be our privilege to consider some of them.”

CONVERTED SKEPTICS

THE lecturer entered, nodded to several with whom he had become acquainted, among them the Emersons, and began:

"Two infidels once sat in a railway car discussing Christ's wonderful life. One of them said, 'I think an interesting romance could be written about Christ.'

"The other replied, 'You are right; and you are just the man to write it. Set forth the correct view of His life and character. Tear down the prevailing sentiment as to His divinity and paint Him as He was—a mere man among men.'

"The suggestion was acted on, and years later the romance appeared. The man who made the suggestion was Col. Robert Ingersoll, the world-famous infidel; the author was Gen. Lew Wallace; and the book was 'Ben-Hur.'

"In studying his sources—the Gospels—for material to write the romance, General Wallace found himself facing the unaccountable Man Jesus. The more he studied Christ's life and character, the more profoundly he was convinced that He was more than a man among men.

"He was amazed by the fact that out of an obscure Galilean village, so mean and low that its very name was a reproach, came this young man, versed in neither Greek nor Hebrew—a young carpenter who had hardly been outside His province, but whose first public utterance, the sermon on the mount, is the most original and revolutionary address on practical morals the world has ever heard.

"He found Christ to be the great central fact in the world's history. To Him everything looks forward or backward; all lines of history converge in Him and radiate from Him. At last, unable to resist the evidence, Lew Wallace, the infidel friend of the infidel Ingersoll, was constrained to cry, like the centurion under the cross, 'Truly this was the Son of God.' So in the writing of 'Ben-Hur,' a book that was to exhibit Christ merely as a very human man, Lew Wallace was converted, and painted Him as the Son of God.

"About ten years ago Europe was thunderstruck by a book

about Christ. The author had been noted as a most rabid atheist.

"He went on to say that he did not turn to Christ 'out of weariness, because his return to Christ made life become more difficult and responsibilities heavier to bear.' Giovanni Papini, for that is his name, wrote a 'Life of Christ' that so amazed the world that it has been translated into all the leading languages. I read it with tingling delight."

I will now tell you about an unbeliever who electrified the doubting as well as the Christian world by announcing that he was going to *demonstrate* that the Bible could not be true.

"Sir William Mitchell Ramsay, in 1881, was a young man of sterling integrity, unimpeachable character, culture, and high education. He had a sincere desire to know the truth. He had been educated in an atmosphere of doubt, which early brought him to the conviction that the Bible was fraudulent.

"He had spent years deliberately preparing himself for the announced task of heading an exploration expedition into Asia Minor and Palestine, the home of the Bible, where he would 'dig up the evidence' that the Book was the product of ambitious monks, and not the Book from heaven it claimed to be. He regarded the weakest spot in the whole New Testament to be the story of Paul's travels. These had never been thoroughly investigated by one on the spot. So he announced his plan to take the book of Acts as a guide, and by trying to make the same journeys Paul made over the same routes that Paul followed thus prove that the apostle could never have made them as described.

"Equipped as no other man had been, he went to the home of the Bible. Here he spent fifteen years literally 'digging for the evidence.' Then in 1896 he published a large volume on 'St. Paul the Traveler and the Roman Citizen.'

"The book caused a furor of dismay among the skeptics of the world. Its attitude was utterly unexpected, because it was contrary to the announced intention of the author years before. The chagrin and confusion of Bible opponents was complete. But their chagrin and confusion increased, as for twenty years more, book after book from the same author came from the press, each filled with additional evidence of the exact, minute truthfulness of the whole New Testament as tested by the spade on the spot. The

evidence was so overwhelming that many infidels announced their repudiation of their former unbelief and accepted Christianity. And these books have stood the test of time, not one having been refuted, nor have I found even any attempt to refute them.

"And so it happened that Sir William Ramsay, who set out to destroy belief in the Bible, has done more than any other one man in modern times to establish, to demonstrate beyond possibility of cavil, the absolute, minute trustworthiness and truth of the New Testament.

"Also I would like to tell you of Adolf Deissmann, the great German scholar whose findings rank second only to Ramsay's. He began his investigations in mood similar to Ramsay's. After years of exploration he arrived, as had Ramsay, at a settled belief in the very Bible he had expected to disprove.

"Next week we will consider what the skeptic has to offer us."

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THIS booklet "*The Search for Certainty*" is an abridgement of the larger work entitled "*Prophecy Speaks*," which may be obtained from the publishers at the price of only 35 cents per copy, or 25 cents each in lots of 25 copies or more. Order it from THE WATCHMAN MAGAZINE, Nashville 8, Tennessee.

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"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Timothy 3: 16, 17.

WHAT HAS THE SKEPTIC TO OFFER?

"It is with reluctance that I approach this subject," began David Dare. "I do not relish attacking the beliefs of another; I should much rather present the affirmative side of Christianity. But I really see no escape from considering what the unbeliever offers us when he endeavors to destroy Christianity. Since he sets himself up as having something superior to Christianity—or he would not try to destroy it—we must carefully examine what he proposes in its place and weigh it thoughtfully.

"You all know that Robert Ingersoll, the renowned skeptic, had a brother whom he dearly loved. Standing by the side of his brother's grave, Robert preached the funeral sermon, uttering in the course of his remarks what has been admired all over the world, by his brother skeptics, as the acme of his genius. I quote:

"'Whether in midsea or among the breakers of the farther shore, a wreck must mark at last the end of each and all. . . . Life is a narrow vale between the cold and barren peaks of two eternities. We strive in vain to look beyond the heights. We cry aloud, and the only answer is the echo of our wailing cry.'

"Whatever else skepticism is, it is not and cannot be the truth. It does not even profess to be a truth. It is admittedly only a negation, a putting out of the candles of others without lighting any in their place, an attempt to plunge the world into the darkness that infidels admit exists in their minds.

"I could quote similarly from others. But why add their doleful testimony? What has the infidel to offer? Nothing; *nothing at all*. He says so. He is wistfully envious of the Christian. He is lonesome and unhappy. Then what has he to offer the Christian? Nothing but his own unhappiness and lonesomeness."

"But, Mr. Dare," interrupted Mr. Emerson, "the agnostic cannot accept Christianity, because so much has to be taken on faith, contrary to what he sees as natural law. He cannot order his life by faith; he must govern himself according to facts. The reason the agnostic has nothing to offer is that he knows nothing about the after life, and to act on faith alone is absurd."

"On the contrary," smiled Mr. Dare, "that is exactly what you do, and what every other human being does."

"I don't understand," said Mr. Emerson, in a puzzled tone. "I wish you would explain."

"Gladly. All mankind, educated and ignorant, artists and scientists, idealists and materialists, believe in things they have never seen and cannot prove. Mathematicians believe in axioms; chemists, in atoms, cosmic ether, and contradictory attributes in bodies; astronomers, in the incomprehensible infinity of space; natural scientists, in invisible natural forces and natural laws. For our own peace of mind we lay down the law that bodies have eternally attracted each other and that they will eternally do so; but we know nothing about it and can prove nothing of the kind.

"According to the great scientist, Thomas Huxley, even science is largely a matter of faith. In his book, 'Evolution and Ethics,' page 121, he says: 'If there is anything in the world I do firmly believe in, it is the universal validity of the law of causation; but that universality cannot be proved by any amount of experience.' And then in his 'Science and Christian Tradition,' page 243, he says further: 'The ground of every one of our actions, and the validity of *all* our reasonings, rest upon the *great act of faith*.'

"The knowledge of infidels is only faith resting on dogmas concerning existence, the forces of nature, matter, atoms, mechanics. Everyone, Christian and infidel alike, lives by faith.

"It is amusing to find that the very man who derides miracles believes in the self-creation of the world; to hear the man who mocks at the creation of the world by God, speak learnedly of unconscious matter producing consciousness, of a primal cell that created itself! He denies the soul of man, but maintains the soul of atoms and believes in the unconscious memory of molecules! He maintains the self-beginning of life, and denies the possibility of creation!

"So next week, in our final lecture, we will consider what Christianity has to offer."

WHAT CHRISTIANITY HAS TO OFFER

DAVID DARE, as he arose to speak, was received by a subdued but apparently unanimous applause.

"What has Christianity to offer you?" he began. "You have heard the very frank admissions of leading skeptics that skepticism has literally nothing whatever except blank despair and soul-terrifying loneliness for the unbeliever. You have listened to the wistful yearnings uttered by these skeptics.

"You have seen how the Bible foretells, even down to the end of time, the history of all the leading nations of the ancient world. Not one of you present, nor anyone else, for that matter, has been able to deny that these prophecies were made centuries before their fulfillment; and no one can account for them on natural grounds. It is admitted by all of you that no other book in the world contains *real* prophecies. The prophecies of the Bible present an unexplainable mystery to the unbeliever.

"Christianity has Christ to offer you. This, according to the testimony of leading infidels, whose words were read here, is the greatest fact in the history of the world. They waxed more enthusiastic over Him than over anyone else in the world. And finally some leading unbelievers publicly renounced their unbelief and admitted joyously their belief in Christ.

"Let us consider for a bit what Christ means to the human race, and therefore to you personally. As the direct result of Jesus' story of the good Samaritan, and His other teachings of mercy, and His own personal tender care for the sick, the horrible practice of exposure and neglect of the sick and maimed is now, and has long been, a thing of the past. Care of the sick or injured in hospitals and sanitariums—humane treatment of disease—is now the rule wherever the Bible has gone.

"Are you a social reformer and interested in the poor? Then consider how the poor have been uplifted by Him. Slavery has been abolished by the teaching of Jesus that all men are of one blood, and brothers in the sight of God. Jesus offers comfort to the oppressed and boldly arraigns the selfish rich. He calls not for the

palliatives of charity, but asks for fundamental social justice for all.

"Do you believe that education is a fundamental in the progress of Christianity? Then observe that knowledge has been promoted by Him. Jesus sought to make men whole in mind as well as in body. When Jesus said, 'Go ye therefore, and teach all nations,' He released, He impelled, the greatest forces directed into the world. There are almost infinite implications in that command. It directs all Christians to scan the history of nations, so as to apply the gospel to every phase or relationship of life.

"To this end, methods of navigation had to be studied and perfected in order to reach all nations, as commanded. This command has unloosed untold energies of men in every age, sending them into the depths of the earth and upon wings above the clouds; to the burning sands of the Sahara, to the chill and solitudes of the Arctic, and to the great unknown fastnesses of Tibet. Why? That the great commission may be carried out.

"The command to teach all nations means that the teacher must know more than the learner. So under the missionary urge of Jesus' words, more than one thousand languages have been reduced to writing, and all kinds of practical as well as religious books have been translated into them by the missionary. In fact, the geographical knowledge of our globe has come largely from the missionaries who have ventured where even the foot of the trader dared not tread.

"The race from which Jesus came was the most hated and the most persecuted in the world, and was at the same time the most bigoted and provincial. Yet He became the one universal Man, uniting Orient and Occident, appealing equally to the East and to the West.

"Socrates taught for forty years, Plato for fifty, Aristotle for forty, and Jesus for only three; yet those three years infinitely transcend in influence the combined one hundred and thirty years that Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, the three greatest men of all antiquity, taught.

"Skeptics praise the clearness of His judgments, the depth of His ethics, the justness of His decisions, the weight of His words, the faultless beauty of His glorious life—its balance, its pure nobility, and its serene power.

"You never exhaust Christ's words. They pass into proverbs, they are enacted into laws, they are consolidated into doctrines, they become consolation for the poor and weary, they grow into the life and transform the character; but they never pass away, and after all the use made of them, they are still as fresh as when first spoken.

"Christ's words have the charm of antiquity with the freshness of today, the simplicity of a child with the wisdom of God, the softness of kisses from the lips of love, and the force of lightning rending mountains.

"The most determined criticism has not been able to dethrone Christ as the incarnation of perfect holiness. The waves of a tossing and restless sea of unbelief break at His feet, but still He stands the supreme model, the inspiration of great deeds, the rest for the weary, the fragrance of all the world, the one divine flower in the garden of the world.

"Skeptics quite freely admit these things, and attempt to account for Christ on natural grounds. They are willing to admit Him to be the greatest man that ever lived, but at any hint of actual deity in combination with His humanity, they arise in determined protest and violent rejection of such a suggestion.

"However, by calling Christ a superman they have by no means solved the difficulty. On the contrary, they have created more difficulties than they had before. For if Christ is not in a real sense God as well as man, He must be the world's greatest deceiver, for He claimed that worship was due Him, that He was the light of the world, that He pre-existed, that He descended from heaven, that He was equal with God (John 5: 17, 18), 'that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father.' John 5: 23; see also John 10: 30, 38. Jesus accepted the title of 'the Lord thy God.' Matthew 4: 7; John 10: 33. When Thomas the skeptic, after Jesus' resurrection, called Him 'my Lord and my God,' Jesus did not rebuke him, but on the contrary said unto him, 'Because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.' John 20: 28, 29. There is much more written, all to the same effect, in all four Gospels.

"To have made the claims He made, if none of them were true, would necessarily brand Him as the most unprincipled deceiver in

all history. Yet there is not a skeptic who will admit He was anything of the kind. You all, equally with me, believe that Christ was honest and earnest, for you know that a bad man could not have taught such great truths as He taught, and that a good man could not have deceived the people for whom He gave His life.

"Thus at once the greatest difficulty in the Bible and the weightiest proof of its inspiration is Christ. He stands out commandingly among all the sons of men, unapproached and unapproachable. He walks down the ages with the tread of a conqueror, while around Him shines a moral splendor that has compelled even the most hostile criticism to bow the head in hushed reverence. Upon the impregnable Rock of Ages all criticisms are baffled and shattered. Christ is, as He prophesied He would be, the great spiritual magnet that draws all men everywhere to Himself.

"From heaven, with the accumulated love of eternity in His heart, came this King of kings, to be one with humanity, to suffer the vilest mockery, to endure the strongest temptations, and to experience the lowest of deaths, that you and I might know what love is, and be restored to Edenic innocence and happiness. Around Him all truth clusters and revolves, as do the planets about the sun.

"And now will you pardon me a personal testimony?

"I was reared an infidel. My parents and other immediate relatives were proud of their unbelief. I was nourished on the vaunting skeptics of the ages.

"But I observed the futile amazement with which every skeptic from Celsus to Wells stood around the cradle of the Christ. I wondered why this helpless Babe was thrust into the world at a time when Roman greed, Jewish hate, and Greek subtlety would combine to crush Him. And yet this most powerful, devastating combination ever known in history served only to advance the cause of the Infant who was born in a stable—the purest human being in the world born in the filthiest place in the world.

"No unbeliever could tell me why His words are as charged with power today as they were nineteen hundred years ago. Nor could scoffers explain how those pierced hands pulled human monsters with gnarled souls out of a hell of iniquity, and overnight transformed them into steadfast, glorious heroes who died in torturing

flames that others might know the love and mighty power of the Christ who had given peace to their souls.

"No agnostic could make clear why seemingly immortal empires pass into oblivion, while the glory and power of the martyred Galilean are gathering beauty and momentum with every attack and every age.

"Nor could any scoffer explain, as Jesus Himself so daringly foretold, why by telephone, airplane, and radio, by rail, horse, and foot, His words are piercing the densest forest, scaling the highest mountains, crossing the deepest seas and the widest deserts, making converts in every nation, kindred, tongue, and people on earth.

"No doubter could tell me how this isolated Jew could utter words at once so simple that a child could understand them and so deep that the greatest thinkers cannot plumb their shining depths. The life, the words, the character, of this strange Man are the enigma of history. Any naturalistic explanation makes Him a more puzzling paradox, a fathomless mystery.

"But I learned that the paradox was plain and the mystery solved when I accepted Him for what He claimed to be—the Son of God come from heaven, a Saviour of men, but above all, my own Saviour. I learned to thrill at the angel's words: 'Behold, . . . unto you is born this day . . . a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.' Now I have learned the great truth that

" 'Though Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem be born,
If He's not born in thee, thy soul is still forlorn.'

"This, then, is what Christianity has to offer: A perfect Model, forgiveness of sins, rest to the soul, a Comforter, a Companion, a Saviour, and then eternal life in communion with myriads of perfect beings. Contrast this with the bewailing despair, the glum hopelessness, the wearing heartache, that is ever the lot of the unbeliever. Which will you choose? The choice is yours, the opportunity now. You have had weeks to weigh the evidence, to feel the thrill of joy in contemplating the Christ. He asks to enter your heart and bring His peace that follows His forgiveness of sins."

Then pausing a moment, his earnest eyes searching the faces of that solemn audience, he said:

"Those who desire to abandon their unbelief and publicly proclaim their acceptance of Jesus as the divine Son of God, their Saviour from sin; those who were formerly skeptics and who desire to be known henceforth as Christians, followers of the Christ, please stand."

More than a hundred rose instantly to their feet. David Dare's eyes turned instinctively to the section where the Emerson family usually sat. His face lighted with pleasure when he saw all four of the Emersons standing.

"Mr. Emerson," he said, "I am happy to see you and your family give this testimony. Will it embarrass you to tell the audience briefly why you have taken this stand?"

"I shall be only too glad to do so." Mr. Emerson's voice was clear, and thrilled with joy as he spoke. "While you have been carrying on these lectures, I have been reading the Bible through. Many things I thought the Bible said, I found it did not teach at all, and many cavils I thought objections, I found vanished before a candid study. Then when I read the New Testament, I found in Jesus peace and contentment for the first time in my life. The terrifying feeling that I was alone in a vast universe, left to grope my way in an infinitude, gave way to one of perfect trust when I grasped the hand of Jesus, the One who created all these things.

"The knowledge that my wrongs, my mistakes, my sins, no matter what they are, have been forgiven, is the most wonderful thrill in all the world. The dread with which I looked forward to my remaining years has turned to a fountain of joy and praise to the Jesus for whom I have always had a high regard, but whom I now trust in as my own Friend and Saviour."

David Dare then asked all who were standing to come forward to meet him, and make arrangements for uniting with the church, preparatory to taking part in giving to all the world "this gospel of the kingdom." Among the first to reach him were Mr. Emerson; Mrs. Emerson, in quiet content; George, in whose soul had been born a new ambition to serve; and Lucile, the once pert, thoughtless girl, now chastened with a new beauty of soul.